

**The President.** I bet you're plenty smart; you know what I'm saying? [*Laughter*] I bet you know what you're doing.

I hope you all have found this interesting. You may not believe me, but you'll believe Bob, or you'll believe Helen, or you'll believe Jerry. These are real-life examples of people who said, "I think I'll just take a look." Twenty-nine million Americans have signed up so far. There's 7 million more we're trying to reach. If you're one of the 7 million who have not signed up, at least take a look—take a look at what's available for you.

This Government of ours has modernized Medicare so that we can look seniors in the eye and say, "We're doing the best we can to make sure your medicine is modern." We don't want people choosing between electricity bills or food and their pharmaceuticals, like that was happening a while back.

This program makes sense for our seniors. It makes sense for our taxpayers. Do you realize that because there's choice in the marketplace, because we've trusted seniors to pick a plan that meets their needs, the estimated costs in the first year to the Federal Government are 20 percent less than thought. In other words, one of the things that's important for our society to understand is that when you trust people, good things happen. It happens for them, and it happens for society as a whole.

I'm proud to be here in Missouri. I want to thank you all for giving us a chance to come by and say hello. We're dealing with big issues. We're dealing with health care; we're dealing with keeping the peace; we're helping our small businesses thrive. It is a fantastic opportunity to come and thank you all for really being, however, the—representing the true strength of America. And the true strength of this country is not in the size of our armies or in the size of our wallets, it's in the size of our hearts.

And for those of you who are helping a neighbor in need, helping a child to learn how to read, or providing shelter for the homeless or food for the hungry or advice to the seniors, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for helping to make this Nation the greatest nation on the face of the Earth.

Thanks for coming, and God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:37 p.m. at the Etta and Joseph Miller Performing Arts Center. In his remarks, he referred to Cynthia Brinkley, president AT&T-Missouri; Carl Rausch, president, Lutheran Senior Services; and Gov. Matt Blunt and Lt. Gov. Peter Kinder of Missouri.

### **Remarks Following a Visit With Senior Citizens in Des Moines, Iowa** *April 11, 2006*

Senator Grassley and I are thrilled to be here. One of the things that's happening is that people around the country are beginning to realize there's a new prescription drug benefit for folks on Medicare. And it's very important for people to understand that this is a very beneficial program.

And so I'm spending time today and tomorrow, as I have in previous months, reminding people that it doesn't cost anything to look—that people ought to take a look and see what this good program does for people.

I want to thank Senator Grassley. He was very instrumental in getting this important piece of legislation through the Congress. One of the things I remember him saying to me is that "As we pass a Medicare bill, let's make sure that Iowa rural hospitals are taken care of." In other words, he was deeply concerned to make sure Medicare was modernized, so seniors have choices and a prescription drug coverage, but he was also concerned to make sure that rural health was available for the citizens of Iowa and around the country. And Senator Grassley has been a strong leader in this effort.

I strongly urge the seniors here in Iowa to take a look. So far about 29 million seniors have signed up around the country. I met with some folks today that have saved good money. Today, for example, I met with Helen and Debbie. Helen saved \$200 a month in her prescription drug coverage, and she convinced her friend, Debbie, to take a look at the Medicare prescription drug plan. Debbie now saves \$1,200 a month—saves \$1,200 a month.

So I urge people not to listen to the noise and all the politics—just get that out of the system—and see whether or not the prescription drug coverage makes sense. If you're a poor senior, this program will help

you a lot. As a matter of fact, the Government pays nearly—over 95 percent of the benefits for poor seniors.

Every senior is saving money, and that's what people have got to know. There is an easy way to find out how the program works, and that's to call 1-800-MEDICARE, or you can go on the computer systems at medicare.gov. Here we're seeing some of our fellow citizens reaching out to seniors to explain the program. And this is happening all across the country. I want to thank those who are here for helping our fellow citizens understand what's available. I fully recognize that when you have a variety of choices from which to choose, it can be a little confusing at first. In other words, people get on the computer, and say, "Look at all these different options."

But the good thing about the programs and the people who are willing to help is that they can design a program that meets your needs. And that's really important. Now, if you're a son or a daughter whose mom or dad is Medicare-eligible, please help your parent; please do your duty. If you're in a church or a community center, find an elderly citizen who has yet to sign up for Medicare and show him or her what is possible. This is a good program for our seniors. It is a good deal, and it's very important for seniors to sign up prior to May 15th.

And so I'm thrilled to be back in your State, Senator. Iowa has got a special spot in my heart. I bring greetings from the First Lady Bush. And I also, again, encourage the citizens here in Iowa and around the country who are eligible for Medicare, to make sure you look at the program. And again, I remind you of the examples of Helen and Debbie. Debbie's case is an extraordinary case, where she is receiving a lot of help. And that's what we want this program to do, is to provide people with a lot of help.

So thank you very much. The Senator and I look forward to greeting you personally. Appreciate you letting us come by to say hello.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:20 p.m. at Wesley Acres retirement community. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## **Remarks at a Reception for Gubernatorial Candidate Jim Nussle in Des Moines**

*April 11, 2006*

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks for coming. Governor, I appreciate that introduction. I can't tell you how delighted I am to support Jim Nussle as the next Governor of the State of Iowa. He was there—he was there in Amana. No question about it. He introduced me. What he forgot to tell you was, he actually sang. *[Laughter]* He'll be known as the singing Governor of Iowa. *[Laughter]*

I've gotten to know this man real well. I've seen him when the heat's on. You know, you can judge a person in Washington by how they react to pressure. Jim Nussle stands strong when there's pressure. You need a Governor of Iowa who can take the heat and lead this State to a better future, and that man is Jim Nussle.

He's a proven leader. See, that's what the people of Iowa need. They need somebody to lead. He's proven himself to be a leader. He's got a record, something people can look at. The thing I like about him is, when he gives your word, he keeps it. When he looks you in the eye and says, "Mr. President, I'm with you," he means it. What the people of Iowa need is a Governor who looks the people in the eye and says, "This is what I intend to do," and then does what he says he's going to do in office, and that man is Jim Nussle.

I like the fact he's getting Democrat support. I think you need a Governor who can reach across party lines to get things done. I was pleased to see Terry Duggan, the former mayor of Dubuque, is here tonight. He's a Democrat who's switching so he can support his friend Jim Nussle. That's the kind of Governor Nussle will be—he's the kind of person who sets clear agendas and clear goals and brings people together to achieve the goals. People in Iowa, like they are all across the country, are sick and tired of needless politics. What they want is leadership. And they'll get strong leadership in Jim Nussle as the Governor.

And I'm proud to be with his wife, Karen, the next first lady of the State of Iowa. I know something about First Ladies—I'm married